

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
HUMAN SERVICES TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 11, 2006

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS
ATTENDING

Carl Harris-Morgan, Town of Gilbert, Chairman	Kyle Moore, DES/ACYF
*Lorenzo Aguirre, City of El Mirage	*Susan Neidlinger, DES/DDD
Judy Bowden, Mesa United Way	*Sandra Reagan, Southwest Community Network
+Linda Snidecor for Kelly Dalton, City of Goodyear	*Sylvia Sheffield, City of Avondale
Jose Mercado for Moises Gallegos, City of Phoenix	Keith Burke for Judy Tapscott, City of Tempe
*Paige Garrett, Glendale Human Services Council	*Wayne Tormala, City of Phoenix, Vice Chair
+Jayson Matthews for Kate Hanley, Tempe Community Council	Jessica Ponzio for Patrick Tyrrell, City of Chandler
*Connie James, City of Scottsdale	Neal Young, City of Phoenix
Jim Knaut for Mary Lynn Kasunic, Area Agency on Aging	
Barbara Knox, DES/RSA	
*Margarita Leyvas, Maricopa County	
Joy McClain, City of Tolleson	
Trinity Donovan for Joyce Lopez-Powell, VSUW	
Stephanie Wilson for Dan Lundberg, City of Surprise	
*Doris Marshall, City of Phoenix	
Joan Ellis for Sandra Mendez, DES/CSA	

OTHERS PRESENT

Jane Albin, City of Mesa
Linda Anderson, City of Phoenix
J. Ray Burrell, Nova, Safe Haven
DeDe Gaisthea, MAG
Brande Mead, MAG
Amy St. Peter, MAG
Teresa Franquiz, MAG
Lee Smyres, Advocates for the Disabled

+Those members present by audio/videoconferencing.

*Those members neither present nor represented by proxy.

1. Open Meeting for Discussion
Chairman Harris-Morgan, Town of Gilbert, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and introductions ensued.
2. Call to the Audience
No comments were made.

3. Approval of March 9, 2006 Human Services Technical Committee Meeting

Chairman Harris-Morgan called for a motion to approve the March 9, 2006, meeting minutes. Judy Bowden, Mesa United Way, moved to approve the minutes. Barbara Know, DES, seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.

4. Social Service Block Grant Allocation Recommendation Revisions

Chairman Harris-Morgan introduced Amy St. Peter, MAG, who began by stating that DES had notified MAG that the Social Service Block Grant (SSBG) allocations for FY 2007 may be reduced by 19.722 percent. DES has asked that MAG submit alternate allocation recommendations reflecting this proposed decrease in funding. She said that this is not good news and has obviously raised concerns.

Ms. St. Peter commented that the Committee could choose to do an across the board reduction, or reduce different areas in each target group. Whatever is decided, the revised recommendations need to be submitted to DES by June 30, 2006, which does not allow a lot of time for the process. She stated that we would need to decide on how the decision would be made today in order to move forward. The FAQ sheet that was handed out offers a summary of the allocations as they stand now. DES is hopeful that the cuts do not come through, but they are requiring the revisions to reflect the deductions submitted before the deadline. Ms. St. Peter said there were significant cuts in 1996 that resulted in some services being eliminated because they could not sustain the funding cuts. She continued by saying there are just over two weeks if the Committee decides to seek public comment. The timeline is in the handout today, including the procedure of how the recommendations will need to go through the MAG process once this Committee settles on their revised recommendations. This Committee must vote on their revised recommendations at their next meeting on June 8, 2006. This will allow enough time for the recommendations to go to MAG Management and Regional Council prior to DES' June 30, 2006, deadline.

Jose Mercado, City of Phoenix, asked if staff could create a matrix with the all of the services on one sheet, rather than broken down by target group. Ms. St. Peter stated that a summary worksheet from DES was provided with the FAQ handout, but that staff can also put the information on a one-sheet handout that would reflect the proposed cuts if they were implemented across the board.

Jayson Matthews, Tempe Community Council, asked if this is related to the work done on the Ranking subcommittee. Ms. St. Peter said the Ranking and Review Subcommittee was for the Continuum of Care HUD application only and represents a separate funding stream. Chairman Harris-Morgan asked who was on the SSBG Work Group this year. Ms. St. Peter noted Pat Tyrrell, Susan Neidlinger, and Sandra Reagan, among others. She noted that one option would be to convene another work group, but that their work would need to be completed soon. Mr. Matthews stated that we need to make sure the process is equitable, and given the short timeframe available, an across the board percentage cut is an option.

Mr. Knaut commented that he would support an across the board percentage cut to a certain degree. He noted that the Committee had eliminated services in the past when there were cuts, and had recommended funding for only the most critical services. At that time, some target groups were affected more than others. He continued by saying that he would rather not get into choosing which services to cut, but suggested implementing an across the board cut across the target groups, then letting the Committee members with expertise in those specific areas decide which services to cut. Judy Bowden, Mesa United, agreed with the even percentage cut across the four target groups.

Ms. St. Peter agreed that this was another viable option; to do an across the board percentage cut and then let each target group's experts decide the funding level for the individual services within their own categories. Mr. Mercado added that it would give the target groups an opportunity to cut or consolidate programs if one department is struggling.

Mr. Matthews asked if there would be time for the Committee members associated with each target group to meet separately and come to a decision. Chairman Harris-Morgan asked the members if they felt they needed an additional meeting before the next regularly scheduled HSTC meeting on June 8, 2006. Barbara Knox replied that she did not think so, and that these decisions could be made relatively quickly within each target category.

Mr. Knaut suggested that the members who represent the appropriate divisions from DES get together with other Committee members during the first hour of the next meeting. Ms. St. Peter asked the Committee if they thought there was time to seek additional public comment. The group responded that in the future it is a good idea to provide more time for public input, but due to current time constraints it may not be possible. Mr. Matthews suggested that a simultaneous effort to educate the public about the impending cuts could be undertaken, but this is a different process from deciding how the cuts should be implemented, if they indeed go through. Chairman Harris-Morgan agreed and said that at this point, members can individual go back to their constituents and encourage them to advocate to their Congress members the importance of sustaining SSBG. Ms. St. Peter added that MAG may also be able to issue a public statement alerting the public about the cuts. She asked whether the members would prefer to release that item now, or wait until after the revised recommendations had been voted on. The group agreed that it would be useful to get the information out immediately if possible.

Mr. Knaut recommended that individual work groups, focused on the individual target areas, meet during the first hour of the next meeting, then bring their suggestions to the full Committee to vote upon during the second hour. If the worksheets and other materials are made available to members well before June 8, 2006, they can come prepared to make the necessary decisions.

Chairman Harris-Morgan asked how the current distribution of funding was originally decided. Ms. St. Peter replied that the initial amounts were set years prior by MAG's Human Services Committees. Each subsequent year, the Committee has chosen whether

to leave those recommendations the same or to slightly revise the recommended allocations. Kyle Moore, DES, asked if the cuts were implemented across the board would represent a reduction of twenty percent overall, or twenty percent from each target group. Ms. St. Peter replied that to reach the overall twenty percent reduction, twenty percent would have to be taken from each target group.

Mr. Knaut asked if it would be possible to assign each Committee member to a work group prior to the next meeting. Ms. St. Peter said that this could be done via email. Keith Burk, City of Tempe, asked if the new spreadsheet could also reflect the amount each individual service would receive if the cut were to be implemented across the board. Ms. St. Peter agreed with this idea, and added that there would also be a blank column where the work groups could make adjustments, if they choose not to implement their group's cut evenly across all the services. Ms. Bowden asked if the services that have not been funded over the last several years could be removed from the working matrix in order to cut down on the length. Ms. St. Peter agreed this could be revised. The group decided that an additional meeting would not be necessary, but that the next regularly scheduled meeting on June 8, 2006, could be extended if needed.

Ms. St. Peter noted for the Committee that she would now be providing staff support so that Teresa Franquiz, MAG, could have more time to assist with a MAG domestic violence subcommittee. She invited Ms. Franquiz to sit at the table and offer her thoughts as the former staff person for the group. Ms. Franquiz agreed that allowing the Committee to break into work groups in order to recommend specific service allocations would be more useful than turning over the task to DES to decide. She noted that the Committee works with four broad target groups, but that there are five divisions within DES that are involved in contracting with SSBG sub-grantees. It would be difficult for DES alone to determine how the cuts across the target groups should be implemented.

Chairman Harris-Morgan asked for volunteers for each of the work groups. Staff will contact those members not in attendance to determine their work group assignments. The following members volunteered for the four target groups: Elderly: Jim Knaut, Jose Mercado, and JoyMcClain; AFYC: Judy Bowden and Kyle Moore; Disability: Joan Ellis and Barbara Knox; DDD: Jayson Matthews & Linda Snidecor.

Chairman Harris-Morgan called for a motion to approve process to determine how to implement the nearly twenty percent cut in SSBG funding for FY2007. Jayson Matthews moved to implement a twenty percent across the board cut among all four of the target groups; this will be followed by breaking the Committee into four working groups at the next HSTC meeting, with one focused on each target service area, in order to determine how the twenty percent reduction should be implemented in each area. Judy Bowden seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Review of the Human Services Survey Draft Results

Ms. St. Peter presented the draft result of the 2006 Human Services Survey. She thanked the people and municipalities who had submitted surveys already. The response has been fairly good with 64 surveys representing 14 municipalities and 31 non-profit agencies. Ms. St. Peter referred the committee to the draft result handout for the specific lists. Of

the surveys submitted so far, Ms. St. Peter reported that overall respondents wanted the most information about homelessness, youth and aging. Respondents seemed primarily concerned about domestic violence as the number one priority. Ms. St. Peter noted that the United Ways were cited frequently as partners and thanked the committee member both for their involvement in the community and on the committee. The agencies especially expressed satisfaction with the work being done by the MAG Human Services Committees and wanted the good work to continue. The municipalities encouraged the committees to expand their analysis of funding, an appropriate topic given the last discussion. Ms. St. Peter said the survey respondents look to MAG to provide information such as special reports and to centrally coordinate planning and services.

Ms. St. Peter asked if the committee felt the results were representative or if more outreach needed to be done to come closer to 100 percent participation. Eleven municipalities still have not responded despite follow-up by staff. Jayson Matthews asked if Tempe had submitted a survey. Ms. St. Peter indicated they had. Group discussion ensued about how to achieve a higher response rate. The suggestions included contacting the public relations staff within the municipalities, as well as the Community Action Programs. Ms. St. Peter said she had also contacted the intergovernmental representatives. She expressed that it seems to be more difficult to collect surveys from municipalities without human services departments or intergovernmental representatives. The remaining cities and towns will be contacted to submit surveys. Ms. St. Peter offered to bring the survey results back to the committee at the next meeting for their review and approval.

6. Update on MAG Homeless Immersion Project

Chairman Harris-Morgan introduced Brande Mead, MAG, who presented an update on the Homeless Immersion Project's newest participant, David Berns, Director of the Arizona Department of Economic Security. Ms. Mead began by saying that Councilmember Greg Stanton from the City of Phoenix took the lead in volunteering last November. The purpose of the homeless immersion is to give elected officials and other key community decision makers' exposure to experience homelessness.

Ms. Mead said that 29 letters were sent out as an invitation for participation and that Director Berns volunteered for a 24-hour experience. She said he began by spending the night at CASS and then spent the day at the Human Services Campus trying to access services. She stated that Director Berns got a lot out of the experience and learned about how DES conducts services on the Campus and as a result has made some changes to accessing services. The changes that have occurred are that two more eligibility workers working from Monday to Friday will be at the Day Resource Center. There will be no limit to the number that can sign in for services, and additional staff will be added to sign-in. Also, there will be a change in procedure for getting birth certificates and more changes will also occur as needed.

Ms. Mead commented that she will do follow up to the invitations sent out and will work with the Valley of the Sun United Way on this project. She asked if the committee had any recommendation of people they would like to invite to please let her know.

Chairman Harris-Morgan asked if there were different options to the level of experience. Ms. Mead stated that yes there are different levels of experience offered and she would be willing to work with anyone on their level of participation. Mr. Knaut asked if legislature had been invited. Chairman Harris-Morgan agreed that this would provide them with a better understanding of the homeless issue.

7. Announcements

Chairman Harris-Morgan referred the members to the final printed copy of the 2006 Regional Human Services Plan. He thanked MAG staff and the committee for their hard work to produce the plan. Jayson Matthews echoed this sentiment. Amy St. Peter thanked the committee members for their diligence and said it was appropriate that they be the first to receive the final version.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm. The next meeting of the Human Services Technical Committee is scheduled for Thursday June 8, 2006 from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 pm at the MAG building, second floor, Cholla Room.